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FROM

Geo. F. Dow

the Editor

6 Sept 1901

A SKETCH OF

TOPPESFIELD PARISH, ESSEX CO., ENGLAND,

BY REV. H. B. BARNES,

Rector of St. Margaret's,

— AND —

THE HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF

TOPPESFIELD PARISH, ESSEX CO., ENGLAND,

BY PHILIP MORANT, CHELMSFORD, 1816.

Annotated and Edited

BY GEORGE FRANCIS DOW,

Secretary of the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.; Secretary of the Topsfield (Mass.) Historical Society; Member of the American Historical Association.

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From
George Francis Dow
The Editor

A SKETCH OF TOPPESFIELD PARISH,

ESSEX CO., ENGLAND.

BY REV. H. B. BARNES, RECTOR OF ST. MARGARETS.

For the last six months I have been trying to gather material for a sketch of the history of ancient Toppesfield. The work would be by no means easy even for an expert, for there appear to have been no previous workers in this field, from whom to gather without toil that which must in the first instance have been discovered at the cost of much time and labour.

Of course the chronicler has the old records on the tombs, the old account books, as well as the old registers, which he can always consult, and which probably would reveal tales of deepest interest to any one who has leisure to study them, and experience and skill to understand the meaning of that which is written in these old-world records, but the present writer confesses with sorrow that even had he the time to spare he has not got the skill; but he hopes that he is no dog in the manger; so should any one (and especially any one interested in the connection between Topsfield and Toppesfield) wish to work up all that can be learned from these original documents, he may count on being met with the heartiest welcome, and the fullest help that can be rendered.

As then, (in the absence of other men's writings from which to steal, and of ability to make original researches) it is impossible to write any account of ancient Toppesfield which shall not be of an imaginative rather than an historical character, I have thought that perhaps some short account of the Toppesfield of to-day might be of interest.

The village is situated in the north-eastern corner of the County of Essex, near to the borders of Suffolk on the east, and of Cambridgeshire on the north; the country is not by any means of the level character that is usually attributed to the whole of Essex. There are no great hills but there is no flat country; all is undulating. Toppesfield itself—whatever the origin of its name—certainly by its position deserves its designation; the church does not stand on the highest ground in the parish, but yet its tower serves for a land-mark for miles around, on all sides except the west, on which side a wood screens it from view; while in the parish about two miles in a southerly direction from the church, is found the highest point in this part of the county, excelled in the whole county only, if at all, by Danbury Hill near Chelmsford.

The soil is almost uniformly clay, and very good for wheat growing, and its fertility is such that even in the present time of agricultural depression there is not an unoccupied acre in the parish. Yet it must not for a moment be supposed that Toppesfield has escaped unscathed; very far from it. Thirty years ago it was as rich and prosperous a little place as could be found; now it is miserably poverty-stricken; then, there were numbers of well-to-do farmers, now, the land is farmed in large holdings by men who, for the most part, live in neighbouring villages; then, many of the old houses dotted about the parish were occupied by large and thriving families; now, the families have gone and many of the houses are either occupied by labourers (*e. g.* Olivers, Cust Hall and Fry's Hall) or are falling into decay as "Mullows" has done. The impossibility of making a living off the land, has driven the descendants of sturdy yeomen to seek elsewhere, the livelihood which the ground their fathers tilled, can no longer afford them.

Nor is the lot of the labourer better than that of the

farmer; though the cause of the trouble is in his case different; for farm labourers wages, have this year stood higher than they have ever been known to be before. But in the old days the daughters and wife would earn more than the father, and would do so without being necessarily taken away from home; even thirty years ago, straw plaiting was a great industry in this part of England. Old crones maintained themselves in comparative comfort by holding "schools" in which infants of quite tender years were taught to plait, and, as the children grew up, they plaited as they stood in their cottage doors or as they lolled about the roads, and their work was every week collected by higglers who came round for the purpose. All this has come to an end now; no straw plait is made here for it can be more cheaply imported from the East than it can be made at home; and though the money that was earned in this way is much missed, yet the village is happier and better for the loss of this business, for straw plaiting always seemed—wherever it was done—to bring a moral deterioration in its train.

There is however an indirect way in which the agricultural depression seriously affects the labourer; it makes it very difficult for him to get a decent cottage. The profits of farming having been so much reduced, the farmers have been unable to pay anything like the old amount of rent and this has hit the land-owning class very hard; in some cases the depreciation of the value of land has been so great that its capital value now is little more than its old annual rent; plenty of good land can now be bought for £7. an acre and in this price are sometimes included farm houses and outbuildings and cottages which have quite recently cost more than now they can fetch, even with the freehold of the land thrown in; small pieces of land without buildings fetch (except for some special reason) even lower prices. I heard last week of thirteen acres of good land in an adjoining parish being sold for no more than £40.

The landlords then, being so hard hit in all cases, and sometimes having positively *no* balance left after they have paid the "charges" on the estate (doweries it may be or pensions determined upon during the fat years of prosperity) are unwilling, even when, through having other sources of income,

they are able, to spend more money than can be helped, on the up-keep of their farm buildings and the cottages on their farms; hence on every side the barns and out-buildings are more or less dilapidated, (though it must be owned that in this respect there has been a considerable improvement during the last two years) hence too the refusal to repair old cottages, so that cottage after cottage is condemned by the medical officer of health as unfit or unsafe for human habitation, and the inhabitants of the condemned cottages are obliged to seek their living elsewhere than in the old parish. As for new cottages, none have been built lately and none are likely to be built, for if the landlords cannot build them no one else will except from philanthropic motives, for it would be difficult to get a nett return of two per cent. on the minimum cost of erection.

The necessary results of such a condition of things are easily understood; the best of the young men go off to the towns, and there gain their living; many of them become policeman or employés on the railways; others become soldiers; the young women go out to domestic service and so the village is left with the old people and the young children to inhabit it. The proportion of the old is something remarkable; that the climate is extremely healthy and that longevity is much more common here than in most places, may have a little to do with it, but fails altogether to account for the wonderful proportion of old people in the population; no, the reason is that the young men and women as soon as they grow up go off elsewhere to seek a better market for their labour; and while we regret losing them, and fear that many of the men like the married man of the story find the change "none for the better and all for the worse," there can be no doubt that the course they take is the one which must seem most reasonable to those who have no knowledge of the condition of unskilled labour in the great towns. The extent to which this exodus is reducing the population of the parish may be judged from the fact that while in 1831 there were 1088 inhabitants; in 1881 there were 861; in 1891 790, and in 1901 there is no doubt that there will be a still further reduction. It is impossible to form an accurate estimate, but I should guess the number at 650, basing my calculation

on the number of children on the school books, which is now 115, while in 1891 it was 146. I am glad to say, however, that the average number in attendance for this year is higher than it was then, for while in 1891 the average was 111, it is for the time that has passed since the beginning of the current school year on April 1st last* 113, which we are proud to consider would be a remarkable performance for any school, but which is highly creditable in a parish where some of the scholars live two and one-half miles away from the school door. The school is a voluntary school supported by a voluntary rate of 4d in the £1, in addition of course to the Government grant; the total cost for a scholar in average attendance being about £2. 10. 0. per annum; the buildings are good and roomy, and would accommodate nearly double the present number of scholars. In the school is also held an evening continuation school for young men which was begun this year and which has been doing fairly well. In this same building are held the meetings of the members of what is known as "the school club," an excellent Benefit Society, a branch of the National Deposit Friendly Society. The Toppesfield branch started some fifteen years ago by the then Rector, the Rev. C. F. Taylor, has over 100 members; many of them however are now living in distant parts and some come from neighbouring villages. Toppesfield has reason to feel proud of its school and of its Benefit Society.

Near the School is the church which is dedicated to St. Margaret; the tower looks imposing from a distance but when examined more closely proves to be a rather poor specimen of the architecture of the beginning of the eighteenth century; there was an old tower, the inside of which must have opened on to the church, with a lofty early English arch, and which is said to have been built of flint and rubble; this fell down on July 4th 1689, and was replaced by the present structure of brick; the tower contains five bells, two of which however need recasting. The church consists of a chancel, nave, and south aisle with a gallery at the west end, against the tower. The chancel contains an interesting old

*It is only fair to state, that during the months April, May and June, there were ten more children on the books, but the average weekly percentage of children present is, for this year, over ninety-five.

tomb surmounted with a cross, built half in and half out of the south wall. There is no inscription on the tomb, and it is not known to whom it belongs. In the floor is an old brass, bearing the figures of a man and woman, and with the inscription

> Pray for the sowlys of John Cracherowd and Agnes his wyff: the whyche John decesyd the yere of Our Lord God 1513, upon whose sowl Christ have mercy.

Near to this there is another brass plate with the inscription:

> Here lyeth buryed William Cracherod, Gent, who died Xth of January 1585, and Eliz: his wyfe the XVIIth of Feb. 1587.

Near to this again there is a tomb, with a full-sized effigy of a man, bearing no inscription, but probably containing an earlier member of the same family of Cracherod.

On the walls of the chancel are commonplace memorials of three former Rectors,* and two memorials of ladies which may be worth transcribing; on the north wall there is a marble monument bearing various symbolical devices† and this inscription:

*Against the east wall of the chancel is a small mural monument, upon which is written as follows:—Ego Richardus King, patria Herefordiensis, educatione Oxoniensi, pofessione theologus, officio capelloneus Jacobi Regis ferenissimi & hujus ecclesiae vicarius indignus, hoc in loco sacrosancto sponte depono & recondo corporis exuvias laus Deo, salus ecclesiae, & animae meae requies in aeternum. Amen. [For illustration of this tablet, see, The Ancient Sepulchral Monuments of Essex. By Frederic Chancellor, p. 325, London, 1890.]

In English:—I Richard King, by country an Herefordshireman, by education an Oxonian, by profession a divine, by office a chaplain to king James and the unworthy vicar of this church, willingly deposit my remains in this sacred place.—Praise be to God, health to the church, and rest to my soul for ever. Amen.—*History of Essex* (*Co.*). *By a Gentleman. Chelmsford*, 1771.

†Two Bibles serve the office of trusses, upon which are two rows of books, that instead of two pilasters support a neat pediment, in the middle of which pediment is a beehive, and under the hive is written *indultria dulcis*, meaning *sweet industry*. Over the hive is placed a dove, with the words *fida simplex* (imparting *simple fidelity*) written below it. Six of the books which compose the pilasters are labelled thus:—Sacrae medit; Soliloquia; Publ. Prec; Praxis Pict; Flores Prac; Psalmi.—*History of Essex* (*Co.*). *By a Gentleman. Chelmsford*, 1771.

VIEWS SHOWING THE WEST PORCH AND INTERIOR OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND.

Sacrum memoriœ pientiss^{æ} fœminœ Dorcadi (sic)
uxori
Guil Smyth armigeri; qui eam prius viduam Guil.
Bigg triumq
liberor matre, ob modestia, pietate prudentia singulare
duxit; et in familia prosapia celebre traduxit; ubi multos
annos ille, spendidœ hospitalitatis et candoris, illa
solertiæ fideique matronalis exemplar; clara omnibusq
nobilib^{s} œque ac infimis chara sui memoria reliqueru
Laudatiss^{æ} aviœ suæ, sacra senecta lectione, meditatione
bonisq operibus indefesse consolanti tandeq inter in-
credibilia
sanctissimæ animæ gaudia ultro in cœlu avolanti H. Bigg
nepos hisce symbolis parentat et lachrymis. Hoc pago
educata.
nupta; Cressingœ, mortua, sepulta.

Obiit 1663. Dec. 18 anno ætat 76.*

*In English:—Sacred to the memory of that very pious woman Dorcas the wife of William Smith, esquire; who married her, when the widow of William Bigg and the mother of three children, for her singular modesty, piety, and prudence; and placed her in a family of great eminence; wherein, he was many years a bright pattern of hospitality and goodness; she, of diligence and conjugal fidelity; persons of every rank held her in great esteem: the memory of them was dear to all who knew them. H. Bigg makes an offering of this and of his tears to his much esteemed grandmother, who incessantly comforted her old age, by reading the holy scriptures, by meditation, and by acts of goodness; and who, at length amidst the inconceivable joys of a most pious soul, willingly winged her way to heaven. She was brought up and married in this town: she died and was buried at Cressing. She departed this life December 18, 1633, in the 76th year of her age. Beneath this inscription is the figure of a lamb placed upon a bible, upon which is written these words: *Biblia fides sacra*, which mean, *Faith in the Holy Bible*: on one side the bible is the representation of a bleeding heart, as figurativeof her feelings for the distressed poor: on the other side is that of an expanded hand; doubtless as a symbol of her readiness always to assist them. The whole is prettily designed, and executed in a masterly manner.—*History of Essex (Co.). By a Gentleman. Chelmsford*, 1771.

On the South wall is a memorial of a young lady of eighteen:

Her disposition was mild and benevolent
her manners gentle and simple
and most respectfully obliging
her sentiments enlarged and liberal
her understanding clear and comprehensive
enriched with an uncommon extent and variety
of attainments, of which she was so far
from making an ostentatious display
that she seemed unconscious she possessed them
nay, the degrading conceptions she unhappily formed
of her own worth moral and intelectual (sic)
were probably the source of insupportable sufferings
"The brain too nicely wrought
Preys on itself and is destroyed by thought."

One cannot but wonder whether the young lady overburdened by the marvellous talents of which she was unaware sought relief in suicide.

The South aisle has a fine old oak carved roof, the date of which can be determined (by the combination of the pomegranite and the rose found on it) to be about the year 1500. At the east end of the aisle there used to be a window with fine old glass, but it having been found necessary, some half century ago, to build a vestry out beyond the aisle, the glass in the window was removed and left about to perish! this is not the only loss—caused by neglect or ignorance—that we have occasion to deplore. At the east end of this aisle there can be seen on one side a piscina, showing that an alter once stood there, and in the other, high up in the wall, the entrance to the rood loft of which no other trace now remains. The font, which stands in the aisle, has no other interest than such as is derived from its great age. The body of the church has nothing to recommend it, the seats are mean looking and uncomfortable for use, the pulpit is commonplace, the west gallery (in which, in the good old days of even fifty years ago or less, sat the performers on the fiddles and the flutes) is Jacobean, but while all built of oak is faced on its pillars with carved oak; the great oak beams which span the nave are similarly cased, and unhappily

neither they nor the roof are in a sound condition. The right of appointing the Rector rests with the Crown; there were here at one time both a Rectory (which then was a sinecure) and a Vicarage; but the Bishop of London, about 1454, finding that the Vicarage had become too poor to maintain a clergyman, united the Vicarage to the Rectory. There is still a piece of the Glebe land known as "the vicarage," which forms a memorial of the old state of things.

The names are known of all the clergy of the Parish since 1300:

DATE.	SINECURE RECTORS.	DATE.	VICARS.
	John Hardy.*		William (died)
1327.	William de Grytton.	1331.	Stephen le Parker.
	John Cory.		John Hokyngton.*
	William Noble.	1385.	William Lambeleye or Welton.*
	William Barret.	1394.	John Cukkowe.
1385.	Thomas Haxeye.*		William Mersey. (died)
1386.	Thomas Banaster.*	1431.	Richard Pumpy.*
1386.	William Gray.	1432.	John Scarlette.*
	Nicholas Manvell. (died)	1433.	William Meyr.
1446.	William Breden.*		John Peteville.
1452.	John Hambalt.	1448.	Henry Huyton.
1454.	William Parker.		

RECTORS.

	William Parker.	
1492.	John Edenham or Ednam, D. D.	Preferred. Dean of Stoke; Canon of St. Paul's; Master of Corpus Coll.
1504.	Thomas Fermyn. (died)	
1520.	Adam Becansawe.	Agent of Thomas Cromwell.
1551.	Thomas Donnell, B. D.	Deprived.
1553.	Cuthbert Hagerston, M. A.	
1554.	Thomas Havard.	
1556.	Richard Wynne.	
1559.	Thomas Donnell, B. D.	Restored. Prebendary of Lichfield.
1571.	William Redman, D. D.	Preferred. Canon of Canterbury; Bishop of Norwich.
1578.	William Whiting.	
1598.	Edward Graunt, D. D.	Canon of Ely; Sub-Dean of Westminster.
1601.	William Smyth.*	
1603.	Theodore Beacon, M. D.	
1604.	Randolph Davenport, B. D.	
1605.	Richard Kinge, D. D.	Chaplain to James I.

* Resigned.

RECTORS.

1621.	Richard Senhouse, D. D.	Dean of Gloucester; Bishop of Carlisle.
1624.	Lawrence Burnell, D. D.	Chaplain to Charles I.
1647-1661.	No rector.	Thomas Overhead intruded.
1661.	Clement Thurston, M. A.	
1662.	Nathaniel Ward, M. A.	
1662.	Edgar Wolley, D. D.	Bishop of Clonfert.
1664.	Richard Collebrand, D. D.	Dean of Bocking.
1674.	Robert Wild, M. A.	Chaplain of the Rolls.
1691.	Thomas Willett, M. A.	
1735.	John Hume, D. D.	Bishop of Bristol, Salisbury and Oxford.
1749.	Samuel Squire, D. D., F. R. S., F. S. A.	Dean of Bristol; Bishop of St. David's.
1750.	Henry Herring, M. A.	
1772.	George Pawson, L. L. B.	
1797.	Lord Henry Fitzroy, M. A.	Canon of Westminster.
1828.	George Henry Gooch, M. A.	
1876.	John Sherron Brewer, M. A.	

* Resigned.

Since the death of which distinguished man in 1879 there have been five other Rectors.

In the Church and Churchyard many of these worthies lie buried, but none of their memorial stones are worth copying. There is one stone however near the Tower which records that:

> Here lieth the body of
> Sarah Norfolk wife of
> Samuel Norfolk the younger
> who was cruelly murdered by
> her husband Septr. 24 1775 at
> a farm call'd Elms in this Parish
> in the 25th year of her age
> The said Samuel Norfolk
> confessed the fact
> was hang'd and desected

The Parish registers date back to 1558 and are in a good state of preservation and fairly legible to those who have mastered the difficulties of the old form of writing; there are also old account books dating back to 1662, and deeds of an earlier date.

On the first page of the earliest register is written in Latin and in English, the doggrel rhymes:

Advent wills thee to contein
But Hilarie sets thee free again
Septuagesima said thee nay
But eight from Easter says you may
Rogation bids thee yet to tarrie
But Trinity gives thee leave to marrie.

The baptisms, marriages and burials are entered in separate parts of the book but mistakes occur every now and then, so that a marriage is entered among the funerals.

Near the church stand the two village inns, the Chestnuts, and The Green Man, both of them picturesque in appearance. The Green Man is as quaint and old-fashioned as it is comfortable and well-managed. The host, Mr. Charles Seaman, has held his house for over forty years, and it is commonly said that there is not an hotel in any of the neighbouring towns for miles round where guests are made so comfortable or where a dinner so well cooked and served can be had.

Standing back in a park-like meadow is the old Manor House known as Berwick Hall; a nice comfortable house, with some old oak in it, inhabited by Mr. Charles Darby, whose family name has been known in Toppesfield for some three centuries at least.

Beyond the "Park" of Berwick Hall is the Rectory, part of which also is very old, dating back to the 14th century. There are traces of a moat round both Berwick Hall and the Rectory. Two years ago (1898) a very fine oak ceiling with large moulded beams, and an old oak doorway, were discovered in one of the rooms, having previously been covered up with plaister and canvas. The Rectory is very sheltered on all sides being enclosed by well-grown trees and with a large old Tithe Barn lying on its north side.

About half a mile from the Rectory on the road to Yeldham, stands "Olivers," with a beautiful approach through an avenue; it is now inhabited by two labourers; there is a panelled room still in an excellent state of preservation though the woodwork has been unfortunately covered with paint.

Toppesfield Hall, which like Olivers, belongs to Mr. J. M. Balls, stands on the other side of the Yeldham road; it is a comfortable modern house inhabited by Mr. J. F. Benson, one of the church-wardens, who is a nephew of the proprietor.

Bradfields is a picturesque house lying rather low, and in a rather dilapidated condition.

Gainsfords is another old Manor house about two miles from the church, occupied by Mr. C. Dean Darby, a son of Mr. Darby of Berwick Hall; it also has some nice oak.

Flowers Hall, about another mile beyond Gainsfords, is another nice-looking house, not very large, but with a wonderful range of out-buildings; it is now occupied by Mr. Clarke who with his family of active sons gets excellent results from some of the least fertile land in the parish.

I have given as fair a description as I can of the Toppesfield of today. What is its future to be? there is I think but little doubt. London is but fifty miles off, though thanks to the bad railway accommodation it takes two hours to get there. The Londoner is more and more developing a love for a country residence, and when the favourite counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex get filled up, as they are doing already, those who like quiet will go further afield. Automobilism, or electric railways, will make travelling easy, and then this corner of Essex with its healthy climate, its quiet beauty, its fertile soil, its fine oaks and other trees will attract the class of persons who want a nice house and a few acres of land. Then land will again fetch in this district ten times what it fetches now; then there will be plenty of employment in stables, gardens and pleasure farms for the men who now flock into the towns. But this will not be in my day. But even now Toppesfield is a pleasant happy place with inhabitants who are not very fond of strangers, but who are essentially good-hearted.

TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND.

FROM

HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE COUNTY OF ESSEX (ENGLAND), BY PHILIP MORANT. CHELMSFORD, 1816.

This parish* was so called from some Saxon owner, named Topa, or Toppa. It is otherwise written in records—Toppesfend, Toppesford, Thopefield. In Edward the Confessor's reign, some of the lands here belonged to freemen, named Alestan; to Duua; to Got, &c., but, at the time of the general survey, part was holden by Eustace, Earl of Bologne, and his under-tenant, Bernard; part by one Ralph; and a considerable share, called afterwards Camoys-hall, by Hamo Dapifer.

These lands were divided, soon after, into the following maners:—The maner of Berwick and Scoteneys; Gaynesfords; The manèr of Husees; Cust-hall; The maner of Camoys, and the maners, or reputed maners, of Flowers-hall, Gobions, Hawkeshall, and Bradfield. Most of these, if not all, are Duchy lands, and belonged to the honor of Clare.

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*Is of large extent, fruitful in its soil, and pleasant in its situation, but not being a great thoroughfare, the roads hereabouts are in general heavy and narrow. The village is but small and rather mean in appearance. *History of Essex Co. By a Gentleman. Chelmsford*, 1771.

This parish extends northward to Great Yeldham; to Finchingfield on the west; southward to Wethersfield, and on the east, to the Hedinghams. Distant from Clare, five, and from London, fifty miles. The village is small, and none of the roads passing through this district being leading thoroughfares, they are in general narrow, and not in very good repair. The soil is a deep tenacious marl, retentive of moisture, and universally requires draining. *Wrights' History of Essex County. London*, 1836.

TOPPESFIELD. A. 3332; P. 861; Rectory, value £900; 2 m. SW. from Yeldham; B. 6. A pleasant, retired village on a commanding emi-

THE MANER OF BERWICKS AND SCOTENEYS.

They were separate at first, but have been long united, and took their names from their respective ancient owners, as will appear in the sequel. Berwick-hall stands a little way south-west from the church. The mansion-house and lands of Scoteneys lie near Yeldham, about half a mile from Berwick-hall. These two constitute the chief maner in this parish, though not the largest. In King John's reign, *Albrey de Wic*, or Wykes, held this estate, of the honor of Bologne, by the service of three parts of a Knight's-fee. He sold it to *Gerebert de St. Clere;* it being then called 84 acres of arable, 3 acres of meadow and pasture, 4 acres of wood, 45 pence rent of assize yearly, 49 days work, and ten hens. Part of the estate, viz.: 8 acres of arable, 5 of meadow, 4 of wood, &c., were holden of Ralph de Camoys.

Scoteneys was then distinct from it, and belonged to *Walter de Scoteney*, a Baron, who had also the maner of Hersham. But, for giving poison to Richard Earl of Clare, whose Steward he was, and to William, his brother, of which the latter died, he was hanged in 1259; and his estate, most probably, given to *John de Berewyk*, who died in 1312; holding the the maner of Toppesfield, of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by the service of one Knight's-fee; and his heir was *Roger*, son of John *Huse*; more particularly mentioned under the maner of Husees. From him it came to *Tho. Rykedon*;

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nence, 280 ft. above the sea. The *Church* (St. Margaret) is of brick, and has a nave, S. aisle of four bays, chancel, and embattled brick tower with 4 corner pinnacles and 5 bells; 3 dated 1675; one 1720; and one 1779. The body was built in 1519, the tower in 1699. In the chancel are mural tablets to Dorcas Smyth (1633); Robert Wildes (1690), rector; Thomas Willitt (1731), rector; the Rev. George Pawson (1797); and Elizabeth Erle (1655); also an uninscribed altar-tomb, on the S. side of the chancel, with floriated cross, probably to the founder of the church; and brasses to Wm. Cracherod, gent. (1585), and wife; and to John Cracherod (1534), and wife. There is also a fine incised stone, with an effigy of a cross-legged knight in armour, and a 14th century inscription to Thomas le Despenser. In the chancel is a piscina and another in the nave. The font is a rude, ancient one. The registers date from 1559. The women and children in this parish are partially engaged in straw-plaiting. *Essex (Co.) Handbook, by Miller Christy. London*, 1887.

TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND.

The Parish Pump. An Old Resident.

The Winding Street.

St. Margaret's Tower. Berwick Hall.

and Robert Rykedon and others sold it, in 1420, to *John Doreward*, of Bocking, Esq., who, at the time of his decease, in the said year, held the maners and other lands, &c., called Berewyk, Scoteneys, and Cardeaux, in Toppesfield, the two Yeldhams, Mapiltrested, Haverill, Hengham Sible, and elsewhere. *John*, his son, succeeded him; and held this maner, with the lands, tenements, rents, and services, called Berwykes, Scoteneys, and Cardeaux, that composed the maner of Toppesfield, of Cecily, Duchess of York, as of her maner of Stamburne. He died in 1476. *John Doreward*, of Great Yeldham, Esq., held the same at the time of his death, the last day of February 1496; and *Christian*, his neice, brought it, in marriage, to her husband, *John de Vere*, the 14th Earl of Oxford on whom it was settled, in case of failure of issue, and on his heirs forever. In this noble family it continued, till Edward [the 17th] Earl of Oxford sold it [he having squandered away his various estates] 1st October 1584, to *William Bigge*, of Redgewell; who died possessed of it, 5th January 1585, and of Gounces, Brownes Farm, Broad-oake, with other estates adjoining. By his wife, Dorcas, daughter of John Mooteham, of this parish, Gent.,* he had William, Samuel, *Edward*, and Dorcas. *William*, the eldest son, who lived at Redfens in Shalford, held several parcels of land in this parish, belonging to the adjoining estate of Gunces; but *Edward*, the younger son had the maners of Berwick-hall and Scoteneys. *Edward*, his son, kept his first Court here on the 8th of October 1635.

In 1645, it came into the possession of *Robert Jacob*, Gent, and, in 1651, into that of *John Blackmore*, Esq. On the 23d of April 1658, *Robert Wankford*, Esq., kept his first Court here. He had two daughters by his first wife; and by his second; Robert, baptized 12th June 1631; and Samuel, 18th December 1632. *Robert*, his eldest son, seated at Berwick-hall, married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Thomas Shelley, of Magdalen-Lavor in this county; and had by her, Berwick,

*She was remarried to William Smyth, of Cressing-Temple, Esq. and dying 18th December 1633, was buried at Cressing. But her grandson, Henry Bigge, Esq. erected a curious monument to her memory in the chancel of St. Margarets.

For illustration of this tablet, see, *The Ancient Sepulchral Monuments of Essex. By Frederic Chancellor*, p. 325, *London*, 1890.

who died young; *Robert*, Walter, Shelley; and seven daughters; of whom, Anne was married to John Elliston of Overhall in Gestingthorp, and afterwards to George Gent, Esq. Mary was wife of John Littel, of London, druggist; and the youngest, of Thomas Todd, of Sturmere. He died in 1688. *Robert*, his eldest surviving son, had no issue by his first wife, Dorothy, daughter of John Fotherby, of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, Esq.; but by his second wife, Mary, daughter of the Rev. John Oseley, Rector of Pantfeild, &c., he had several children. He was buried here on the 20th of June, 1708.

Some time after, the maners and demesnes of Berwicks, Scoteneys, and Gaynesfords, coming into the hands of Mr. John Poultnor, Attorney at Law, at Clare, he sold them to *Isaac Helbutt*, a rich merchant; from whom they passed to *Moses Hart*, and to *Wulph Ridolphus*, or, as some call him, *Michael Adolphus*, Esq.

THE MANER OF GAYNESFORDS,

Just now mentioned, took its name from an ancient family, who had also Gobions in this parish, Ashwell-hall in Finchingfield, Nicholls in Shaldford, &c. *Richard Gaynford*, who died 20th May 1484, held lands in this parish, which we suppose to be these. His brother John succeeded him. *William Butcher* held this capital messuage, and 24 acres of land, in Queen Elizabeth's reign. June 14, 1669, Thomas Guyver, with Samuel Edwards and Margaret his wife, daughter of Francis Guyver, sold this capital messuage to *Robert Wankford*; from whom they passed as above. Gaynesfords is near two miles south-west from the church.

THE MANER OF HUSEES.

Roger, son of *John Huse*, upon the death of John de Berewyk in 1312, inherited this estate, to which he gave name. This Roger sprung from the ancient family of Huse in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire; was a great soldier; became a knight; had summons to Parliament in 1348 and 1349, and died in 1361; being seated at Barton Stacy, in Hampshire. *John*, his son, succeeded him. In 1419, Alexander

Eustace and John Wood sold this estate to John Symonds. *Henry Parker*, of Gosfeild, Esq. who died 15th January 1541, held this messuage, called Hosees, and 80 acres of arable and meadow, of John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, in socage; besides other parcels here,* and great estates elsewhere. *Roger*, his son, succeeded him. *William Cratchrode*, junior, held this maner in 1585. About the latter end of Queen Elizabeth, it was holden by *John Alston*, of Belchamp Oton, who gave it to his third son, *Matthew*; and and he having no issue, bequeathed it to *Thomas Cracherode*; of whom it was purchased by Colonel *Stephen Piper*; and it is now in the possession of Dr. *Piper* [whose family sold it to Henry Sperling, Esq., of Dines Hall].

THE MANER OF CUST-HALL.

The mansion-house stands near a mile south-west form the church. It took its name from an ancient and considerable family† which were seated here in King Edward the Third's reign. Afterwards, it became the Cracherode family that had long been settled at a place called from them Cracherodes, in this parish. The first of the name that hath occurred to us, was *John Cracherode*, witness to a deed, 17th Richard II. 1393. His son *Robert*, was father of *John*, an Esquire under John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, at the battle of Azincourt. *John Cracherode*, Gent., son of the latter, married Agnes, daughter and heir of Sir John Gates, of Rivenhall; and had by her, *John*; William, Clerk of the Green Cloth to King Henry VIII, and Thomas, who had to wife Brigett, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, second son to John the 15th Earl of Oxford. *John*, the eldest son, paid ingress fine for Cust-hall in 1504. He married Agnes, daughter of Tho. Carter; and departing this life in 1534, was buried in the middle of this church, under a grave-stone,

*Namely, Shoremeadow, Foxholes; a messuage, called Dudmans, and 70 acres of arable and meadow; two tenements, called Griggs and Algers; St. John's Land, &c.

†The Cust family was originally of Yorkshire, but long seated in Lincolnshire; as may be seen in the Baronetage, vol. iv, p. 629, under the article of the Right Hon. Sir *John Cust*, present Speaker of the House of Commons.

with an inscription. They had four sons and four daughters; viz., Helen, wife of William Hunt, of Gosfeild, Gent.; Joan, of John Tendring, of Boreham, Gent.; Julian, of . . . Lee; and Jane, of Peter Fitch, of Writtle, Gent. *William*, the only son whose name is recorded, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Ray, of Denston in Suffolk. They lived 56 years together in wedlock. At the time of his decease, 10th January, 1585, he held this capital messuage, called Custs, and 20 acres of free land, belonging of old thereto; also a messuage, anciently called Cracherodes, and afterwards Colman's, in this parish and in Hedingham Sible; with several other parcels of land; particularly Albegeons, and Camois Parke, Pipers Pond, &c. He, and his wife, which died 17th February 1587, lie both buried in the chancel of this church, under a blue marble stone. They had issue five sons and one daughter; viz., Thomas; Matthew, of Cavendish; John, Charles, William. The daughter, named Anne, was wife of John Mootham.—*Thomas*, the eldest son, married Anne, daughter of Robert Mordaunt, of Hemstead in this county, Esq., a younger branch of the Lord Mordaunt, of Turvey in Bedfordshire; by whom he had William, who died without issue; Thomas; and four daughters: Frances, married to Robert Wilkins, of Bumsted; Anne, to John Alston, of Belchamp-Oton; Elizabeth, to John Fryer, of Paul's-Belchamp, and Barbara, to . . . Harris. He died 14th June 1619.—*Thomas*, his son and heir, then aged 40 years, married Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Godbolt, of Finchamp in Norfolk; John, of Cranham-hall in Romford; Richard; and three daughters: Elizabeth, Brigett, and Susan.—*Mordaunt*, the eldest son, married Dorothy, daughter of Antony Sammes, of Hatfeild-Peverell. He died 2d of February 1666, and she 6th of March 1692. Both lie buried in this church.—They had issue, Thomas, baptized on the 17th of September 1646; Antony; Mordaunt [who was a linen-draper of London]; and Mary, wife of Christopher Layer, of Boughton-hall, Esq. Thomas, the eldest son, married Anne, daughter of Christopher Layer, of Belchamp St. Paul; by whom he had Thomas, baptized the 1st of June 1680. He was buried in this church the 8th of July 1706. *Thomas*, his son and heir, sold this maner, in 1708, to

Colonel *Stephen Piper*, mentioned a little before [whose family sold in to Henry Sperling, Esq., of Dines Hall].

THE MANER OF CAMOYS,

Is the largest in this parish; consisting, in time past, of two Knight's-fees, holden in the honor of Clare. The mansion-house stands near the church, and formerly had a park. In Edward the Confessor's reign, Got held this lordship, as lying in this parish and Stanburne, and then in two maners; which, at the time of the survey, belonged to Hamo Dapifer. How long it continued united with Stamborne, we cannot certainly discover.

Sir Ralph de Camoys,* from whom it borrowed its name, held it under Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, in 1262, as two Knight's-fees. He was a man of great note in his time; and after the taking of King Henry III, prisoner at the battle of Lewes, was chosen, by the discontented Barons, one of their Council of State, to govern the Realm.† He was also summoned to Parliament, 24th December 1264. He died in 1276.—*John*,‡ his son and successor, was father of *Ralph*, who gave this estate, in free-marriage with his daughter *Ela*, to *Peter Gonsell*, or Gonshill. This family was originally of Yorkshire, *Giles Gonsell*, by Eminentia, daughter of Fulk de Oyry, of Gedney in Lincolnshire, had *Peter*; who, by the said Ela his wife, had *Ralph* and Margaret. Ralph dying in 1295, was succeeded by his sister, *Margaret*, who had two husbands, first, *Philip le Despenser*, 4th son of Hugh le Despenser, Earl of Gloucester. He

*The name of Cammois is in the list of those that came in with William the Conqueror.—*Chronic. J. Bromton, col.* 963.

†See *Dugdale's Baron. vol. i, p.* 767.

‡This John married Margaret, daughter and heir of Sir John de Gatesden; and she forsaking him, and living in adultery with Sir William Paynel, John de Cameys, as he calls himself, quitted all his right and title to her, as also to all her goods and chattels, spontaneously delivering and demising her unto the said Sir William, and releasing all title and claim to her and her appertenances; as appears by the deed, printed at length in Sir William Dugdale's Baron. vol. i, p. 767.—After her lawful husband's decease, she was married to the said Sir William, and claimed thirds of Camoys estate; which the Parliament, out of due regard to morality and law, refused her.

departing this life in 1313, she took to her second husband, Sir John Roos, and lived till 1349. By her first husband, she had *Philip le Despenser;* who, at the time of his decease, in 1349, jointly with Joane his wife, held, of the Lady of Clare, a tenement here called Camoy's-hall, by the service aforesaid. *Philip*, his son, by . . . daughter of . . . Strange, had Philip, who died in 1400; leaving, by his wife, Margaret Cobham, Sir *Philip*, his son and heir, that departed this life in 1423, and held this maner of Edward, Earl of March; as also those of Lyndsells, Little Stambridge, and a fourth part of the maner of Thaxted. He married Elizabeth, one of the daughters and coheirs of Sir Robert Tiptoft; and by her he had his only daughter and heir, *Margery*. She was married, first, to Sir *Roger Wentworth*, third son of John Wentworth, of Elmes-hall in Yorkshire, Esq. a younger branch of the Wentworths, of Wentworth Woodhouse; from whence are descended the Earls of Stratford. Her second husband was John Lord Rosse; by whom she had no issue. But by her first husband, she had two sons; Philip; and Henry, the first of this family seated at Codham-hall; from whom sprung the Wentworths, of Gosfeild and Bocking; and several daughters. She died the 20th of April 1475. Sir *Philip Wentworth*, her eldest son, and heir to this estate, married Mary, daughter of John Lord Clifford; and had by her, Sir *Henry*, father of Sir *Richard*, a Knight-Banneret; who, by Anne, daughter of Sir James Tyrell, of Gipping in Suffolk, had Sir *Thomas* Wentworth, of Nettlested, created Baron Wentworth the 2d of December 1529. He married Margaret, daughter of Sir Adrian Fortescue; and had by her, *Thomas*, Lord *Wentworth*, who held his first Court here the 16th of June 1551.—He had also the maners Hackney and Stepney; and was the last Governor of Calais under Queen Mary I. The 4th of 13th of May 1557, he sold Camoys-hall to *William Fitch*, Esquire, of Little Canfield It continued little more than twenty years in his name, for he dying the 20th of December 1578, it came to his son Thomas; who surviving him but a little while, it then fell to his only daughter and heir, *Mary*, that had been married, about the year 1556, to *Francis Mannock*, Esq. . . . . who died 3d of November 1590 and was succeeded by his

son *William*; whose son and heir, *Francis*, was created a Baronet the 1st of June 1627; and had for successors, Sir *Francis* and Sir *William*. The latter sold this estate, the 25th of March 1713, to *Matthias Unwin*, of Castle Hedingham, Gent, who died the 18th of September 1715; and, by will, bequeathed Camoys-hall to his brother's son, *Joseph*. This latter dying in September 1747, was succeeded by his eldest son, *Joseph Unwin*, Gent. [of Castle Hedingham.]

FLOWERS-HALL,

Is about two miles south south-west from the church. From a family that existed here from 1369 to 1572, it took the name of Flowers. *Thomas Glascock*, who died 29th October 1631, held the maner and capital messuage called Flowers-hall, Giddings, and Brownes, with appertenances, of Edward Benlowes, Esq, of his maner of Justices, in Finchingfield, by the annual rent of 8 s. one cock, one hen, and an egg and a half. It was afterwards *Henry Glascocks.** This estate paid quit-rent to Nortofts in Finchingfeild.

GOBIONS,

Is denominated from an ancient knightly family, surnamed Gobyon, that had considerable estates at Finchingfeild, Bardfeild, Great Lees, Laindow, East Tilbury, &c. . . . . Sir Thomas Gobion was High Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1323. . . . John Gobyon is in the list of the gentry of this county in 1433. *Richard Gainford*, mentioned above, under Gaynesfords, held this maner of Gobyns in 1483, of John Doreward, as of his maner of Great Yeldham. *John*, his brother, was his heir. It was afterwards in the Wentworth family.

HAWKES-HALL,

Formerly belonged to a family surnamed De Hausted; from whom it passed to the St. Martins, and the noble family of Bourchier; in which last it continued long. Some of their

*This estate afterwards became the property of Mr. Ralph Jephson, by marriage with the daughter of William Raymond, of Notley.

mesne or under-tenants were, Joane, daughter of John Gilderich, of Peches in Finchingfeild, about 1422; and John Helyoun, Lord of the maner of Bumstead-Helion, in 1450. It is described as comprehending 100 acres of arable, 8 acres of meadow, 8 acres of pasture, and 10 acres of wood. It passed since to Bendlowes, &c., as Justices in Finchingfeild.

THE MANER OF BRADFIELD,

Near a mile sout-west from the church, was holden, about the year 1393, by John Bradfend or Bradfeild, from whom it received its name. He had also the maner of Nicholls in Shalford. William Toppesfeild held it of John Durward, at the time of his decease, in 1480; and his two daughters, Elizabeth and *Joane* Toppesfeild, were his heirs. The latter brought it in marriage to . . . *Paynell*, and was his widow in 1498. The Paynell, or Pannell family, was in these parts as early as the reign of King Edward I, and had an estate at Redgewell, where John Pannell lived in 1385, and his posterity continued till the reign of King James I. *Henry Pannell*, Esq., who died the 18th of July 1573, held this maner of Bradfield of the Earl of Oxford, as of his maner of Berewikes, and other lands here. His son and heir, *Henry*, was then 12 years old. [This estate afterwards passed into the hands of Mr. John Darby, of Little Waltham, Essex co., and at his death devolved to Mr. Solomon Edwards of Thackstead.]*

*Some curious Roman remains were found on June 28, 1800, by a labourer making a ditch at the bottom of Red Bamfield, belonging to Bradfield Farm, situate about two miles west by south of the ancient Roman road from Camulodunum to Camboritum, (Colchester to Cambridge).

"The sword blade, which was very much corroded and broken in two or three places, lay across the breast of the skeleton found therewith; it was rather a singular situation, for in general they are found by the side of the person interred.

The metal vase and *patera* merit attention. The vase was of that form which Montfaucon calls a *præfericulum* used by the Romans at their sacrifices for pouring wine into the *patera*.

The uses of the elegant little cups of Samian ware, one of which has an ornamented border, have not, that I can find, been ascertained. As they were interred with the corpse we may suppose them to have contained holy oil, gums, balsams, unguents, &c., but this is conjecture only. The real purposes to which they were applied must remain at present in obscurity; we only know that such things were

AN OLD COTTAGE, TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND.

THE RECTORY, TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND.

OLIVERS is an ancient capital messuage in this parish, about three quarters of a mile south-east from the church. John Oliver purchased an estate of John de Raclesden, about 1360, which is supposed to have been this. He was one of Sir. John Hawkwood's Esquires, companions, and fellow-warriors; and concerned in founding his Chantry.*

Richard Simon was possessed, in 1627, of this tenement, called Olivers and Dudmans, and, in 1631, Thomas Glascock, above mentioned, had a messuage, and 12 acres of land thereto belonging, called Olivers;† with Ashleies and Gadleies, two other parcels. Here were in this parish two acres and a half of land, called Molle, given for one obit and a lamp;

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used at their funeral obsequies, particularly unguents and perfumes of several kinds for anointing the body before interment; therefore we may conclude that they were used at the funeral, and were afterwards deposited with the body, according to the custom of the ancients.

Only one Roman coin was found, and that very imperfect. Whether it was the *obolus*, the *naulum Charontis*, is left for others to determine. A nail and a handle of a bronze *patera* were found at the same time."—*Archæologia, vol. xiv, pp.* 24–26, 2 *plates, London*, 1803.

*The friends and executors of Sir. John Hawkwood founded a famous *chantry*, for one Chaplain in the church of Hedingham, to pray for the souls of Sir John Hawkwood, Thomas Oliver, and John Newenton, Esquires, his military companions, supposed to be born in this county. The license for this foundation was in 1412; and the endowment consisted of 4 messuages, 4 tofts, 420 acres of arable, 13 acres of meadow, 20 of pasture, 4 of wood, 22 of alder, and 12 s. rent, in Sible and Castle Hengham, Gosfeild, Mapiltrested, Great and Little Gelham, and Toppesfeild. The house where the Chantry Priest lived stands at some distance from the church, and bore then, and still bears, the name of Hostage; having originally been a charitable foundation for the entertainment of devout Pilgrims. The patronage of this chantry belonged to the Lord of the maner of Hawkwoods.

†This estate was occupied at one time, by Samuel Symonds, gent., who came to New England, in 1637, and settled at Ipswich, where the town granted him a farm of five hundred acres, lying partly within the present bounds of Topsfield. This farm was known on the records as "Olivers." *See ante, pp.* 40, 41.

The family of Symonds was originally of Croft in Lancashire, where they continued in a direct line for about twenty generations. Richard Symonds of the third generation was seated in Great Yeldham, at "The Pool," on the eastern bank of the river Colne. He married, Jan. 9, 1580, Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Plumb, of Yeldham Hall. Samuel, the third son, married Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Harlakenden, of Earl's-Colne; was a Cursitor in Chancery; and had Oliver's in Toppesfield; but retired to New England with his family. *Morant.*

with about three acres more; which, at the suppression of Chantries, were granted to Thomas Golding, Esq. Samuel Hurrell, John Piper, Geffrey Cook, Matthias and Edmund Davey, Tho. Orford, and Tho. Teader, have also estates here. This parish is rated to the land-tax at 1692 £. 1 s. 4 d.

The CHURCH, dedicated to St. Margaret, is tolerably handsome and spacious. It was formerly, all leaded; but is now only so in part. The chancel is tiled. About 70 years ago, the tower, which was built of flint and stone fell down; but hath since been rebuilt, of brick, in a firm and substantial manner; towards which, Mr. Wilde, Rector at the time it fell, bequeathed 100 £. To it belong five bells. Here was, anciently, a rectory and vicarage; of both which, the Prior and Convent of Stoke near Clare, whilst a priory, and when a college, the Dean and Chapter, were patrons. In what year, and by whom given to them, is unknown. The rectory was a sinecure; and so continued, till Thomas Kemp, Bishop of London, finding the vicarage was grown so poor* that it could not maintain a Vicar, or discharge the burdens incumbent thereon, so that it had been vacant and neglected several years, he reunited and incorporated again the rectory and vicarage. At the dissolution of religious houses, the patronage of this rectory coming to the Crown, King Edward VI. gave it to his proeceptor, Sir John Cheke; upon whose unhappy fall, it reverted to the Crown, and hath remained in it ever since; it being a considerable living. There are lands of about six pounds a year, belonging to the church.

TOPPESFIELD, ENG. * * * "I found the ride exceedingly pleasant, along the narrow but excellent road, which winds its way through an unbroken succession of luxuriant cornfields and meadows. * * * It was evening when I arrived, and the 'Green Man Inn' received me. This is a small, but neat and comfortable tavern, and bears the marks

*At the petition of William Parker then rector, with the consent of the dean and chapter of St. Paul, and the arch-deacon of Middlesex.

of a respectable antiquity. It is, in fact, just such a place as the ale-house of Goldsmith's poem, and has been, I presume, the nightly resort of the Toppesfield politicians, for at least two hundred years.

When I went out the next morning, I found myself in a small village, composed of stone cottages, mostly plastered, white-washed and thatched. I saw nothing in them particularly pleasing, beyond that aspect of neatness, and those floral adornings, which rarely desert even the meanest rural home in that beautiful country. My first visit was to the church of St. Margaret. * * * The interior interested me much. A place of worship more rude in aspect, or less adapted to comfort, it would, I am sure, be difficult to find in all New England. * * * The pews are narrow, upright boxes, with high sides, and, with the exception of the Rector's, are uncushioned and uncarpeted, a few of them, however, were supplied with straw covered hassocks. Upon the southern side there are four Gothic arches, which rest upon short thick columns. On this side there is a low gallery, erected, as an inscription shows, in 1833. The pulpit and reading desk are on the opposite side. These are of oak, and the former resembles, in shape and appearance, that interesting relic, the old Capen pulpit. * * * [In the church registers I found] the name of Samuel Symonds, gent., and that of Dorothy his wife. Between 1621 and 1633, I found and copied the baptisms of ten of their children. * * * The Parsonage is a charming residence, surrounded by flowers and shrubbery, and smooth-shaven lawns. The present incumbent lives among his people and seems to be regarded with respect and affection. * * * Here I was in a community of several hundred people, not a man of whom owns one rood of the land which he cultivates—not an individual of whom possesses the house that shelters him. These skillful farmers are tenants at will—and are perpetually struggling under an oppressive burden of rents, and tythes, and taxes, and rates. These hardy laborers think they do well, if their toil yields them the average remuneration of a shilling a day. As to religious privileges they have indeed a sitting, hired or free, in yonder rude church. Their Rector, sent them by the Queen, may be a good man, or he may

not. With the question of his appointment or dismission, they have just as much concern as you have. They are, however, permitted to pay him. From that glebe, which is made so rich by their sweat, he draws an annual stipend, three times as large as that which you raise for your two clergymen. And here, in a parish which pays its Rector more than thirty-five hundred dollars a year,—here within four hours ride of the grand metropolis of the world, here, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a free school is a thing which yet remains to be invented."—*Nehemiah Cleaveland, in Salem Register, Nov. 1851.*

TOPPESFIELD, ENG. * * * "At Yeldham the only cab we could find was a little dog-cart with a Welch pony that hardly came up to the shafts. However, this was all that was necessary and the owner told us he would take us for two shillings if we 'didn't think that much would harm us.' He proved himself capable of giving considerable information about the church and the chapels (as Congregational and Methodist churches are called in England) as his father had been Parish Clerk at Yeldham for a good many years, but when I asked him the origin of the name Toppesfield his answer was: 'Well, that's a question I could hardly answer, Sir. They must-a-caught it as it come along. Come by a whirlwind perhaps.' Mr. Lane, the genial teacher of the parish, told us that the only reason he could find was from the fact of its being the topmost village in the shire. * * * We had been informed that some years before, a gentleman from Topsfield, America, had come to see the graves of his ancestors; the woman who told us could not remember the name, and so we mentioned over the names of Cleveland, Peabody, Bradstreet, thinking it might be some of these, but none of them seemed familiar. Finally the mother came in and said: 'Why, it was the one who had six wives, Joseph Smith* was the name.'

*Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, was of Topsfield ancestry. The Smith referred to may have been a descendant,

The present school was built in 1856 by the then Rector, Rev. Mr. Gooch. It has accommodations for two hundred children and has one hundred and forty names on the register."—*Rev. Lyndon S. Crawford, in Salem Gazette, Nov. 25, 1886.*

TOPPESFIELD, ENG. * * * "All the fields are separated by hedges and these are generally well kept. The whole country looks neat and tidy. * * * The village was but a handful of houses along a narrow road or two, without any sidewalks to speak of. We left our traps at the 'Green Man' inn and got a glass of home brew, rather sour and not very good. * * * The Church itself is not at all large, and would hardly seat two hundred persons. It was built early in the 16th century, and has been very well preserved, Even during the Commonwealth, it was not much disturbed. It is one of the very few parishes whose records are kept throughout that period without a break. We were assured that that was a very unusual circumstance."—*Brandreth Symonds, in Essex County Mercury, Oct. 24, 1894.*

TOPPESFIELD, ENG. * * * In approaching Toppesfield, the high hills of the town come into view before the train leaves you in the valley. The station building might be called a primitive one:—old, dilapidated, and inconvenient. Nevertheless it serves for the transaction of the limited business of a small country station. The village is about one and a half miles from the station, if one takes the short cut across the fields on foot in a direct line. The road makes a detour in a southerly and southwesterly and then in a northwesterly course to avoid the steep acclivity, and covers about two miles before reaching the village. The way for the most part is a gentle ascent,—one rise of many rods being steeper than the rest.

We first reach that part of the village where the rectory is located. It is large and commodious for a place of the size of that in which it is situated. The building is almost entirely obscured by shade trees, shrubbery and evergreen. Passing on some twenty or thirty rods, in a northerly direction, going by several dwellings we come to the end of the street that we have traversed. Here we meet another street lying east and west,—the principal street of the village. Near the right hand corner is St. Margaret's—the parish church. Farther on to the right is the school house. Near the left hand corner is a chapel where the Nonconformists worship. To the westward some rods, is the post-office.

I did not explore the whole village, but it will be seen by the location of the public buildings that I was in the central and most important part of it. St. Margaret's Church has been an active force in the village for eight hundred years. . . . The interior as well as the exterior has all the marks of an old structure. Few changes have been made in modern times that conceal its ancient appearance. * * * A tablet on the wall of the interior has a list of rectors extending back three hundred years and more, I transcribed some of the names that may be interesting to Topsfield people. 1559, Thomas Donnell, B. D.; 1601, William Smith; 1604, Randolph Davenport; 1662, Nathaniel Ward; 1691, Thomas Willett; 1694, Robert Wilde.

A curious fact to be noticed in the list of rectors is that in the days of the Commonwealth there is a break in the list with a statement that there was a vacancy in those years. Although there was no "rector," doubtless there was preaching in the church by Dissenters in that interval. The church stands in the midst of, and is entirely surrounded by the churchyard. The small cemetery is still in use for burials. I noticed that they were opening graves in what appeared to be the oldest part of the yard. The inscriptions on the oldest monuments are illegible as well they might be in a cemetery eight hundred years old. I noticed the monument of Henry Howlett, who died in 1773, aged 72.

The chapel of the Nonconformists I did not enter. It is a very plain and unpretending building.

The post office is in the house of the post master. Apartments of modest proportions are set apart for the government office. There is no room for the floating population of the town to assemble in for social intercourse, to talk over the news of the day, and enjoy the village gossip. In fact if there was such a place in the village I failed to discover it.

The houses, barns, and out-buildings are generally built of brick. The style of architecture is not pretentious. There is not the facility for architectural display in small brick buildings, that there is by working in wood. I noticed here as well as through England, as far as I travelled, the projecting second story of old houses, like that of our own Capen house. One house in particular, better than the average, in the old style, I was informed was a modern built house. They have a way in England, and I think to a great extent, of building after the style of several hundred years ago, to have the buildings conform those in the neighborhood.

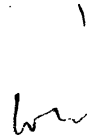
The most of the people, I suppose, would be reckoned in the middle class. Some as indigent or poor. The better classes have comfortable homes, and show intelligence and cultivation.

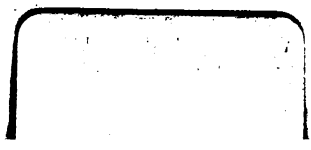
Toppesfield is especially an agricultural town. It has a good soil. The soil of Essex is not as fertile as that of some other parts of the kingdom. I heard Englishmen in speaking of the county, say that the land in Essex is poor. Such may be the case as far as the county in general is considered, but I think an exception must be made in the case of the plateau upon which Toppesfield is situated; for there the farmers were harvesting good crops and the land was making abundant returns for the labor and skill of the husbandmen; much better probably than the average of the county. The principal crops are wheat, barley, vegetables and hay. Being remote from any large town, market gardening is not carried on. Much of the hay crop is stacked in the fields where it is gathered, as it is in other parts of England. I noticed stacks that had breasted the storms of one or more winters, notwithstanding the great demand for forage on account of the wars in which the nation was engaged. The barley

product is largely used for malt to brew the universal English beer. It was wheat harvest when I was there. I saw an abundant yield of wheat on the highest land in the village, as large, I should judge, as that of the most fertile parts of the island. The parish of St. Margeret's has some of the best land in the place, I do not know how many acres, some of which is divided into small "allotments," each of an acre or less, one half, one quarter, or one eighth of an acre. These are let, at a low rental, to indigent people of the parish who have no land, the proceeds of which go to help other poor people.

The following Toppesfield names taken from the voting list are of interest as being common to our own Topsfield and vicinity:—Allen, Barker, Barnes, Clarke, Davison, Hale, Hardy, Palmer, Reed, Rice, Smith, Wilson.

Justin Allen, M. D., March 15, 1901.





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